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FROM the LAND



WILDLIFE IN ART SHOW
JUNE 5 AND 6
DETAILS INSIDE

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Tidelands of the Connecticut River A Last Great Place

I am pleased to announce The Nature Conservancy Connecticut Chapter's most ambitious program ever: Tidelands of the Connecticut River. With this long-term initiative, The Nature Conservancy recognizes this region as one of the Last Great Places in this hemisphere.

Tidelands of the Connecticut River encompasses the lower half of the Connecticut River in this state. The tidally influenced portion – the tidelands – stretches 37 miles from Wethersfield to Long Island Sound, and is fed by another 78 miles of significant tributaries.

This region with its salt, brackish, and freshwater marshes is biologically one of the richest and most productive in the state. It is also a place where thousands of people live, work, and vacation. The challenge of the Tidelands program will be to protect the region's fragile natural habitats in a way that harmonizes with the vigorous human use of the area.

For more than three decades, The Nature Conservancy Connecticut Chapter has worked quietly and effectively to protect the rare plants, animals, and natural communities struggling to survive in Connecticut. Much of the Chapter's work has focused on the Connecticut River, one of the state's most prolific – and most threatened – centers of natural diversity.

The conservation challenges we face have changed, and so has our understanding of the world in which we live. The Nature Conservancy still protects the habitats of rare species by purchasing or receiving donations of land and conservation easements, then caring for those preserves through our stewardship program; we know that is the most effective way to save the species themselves from extinction.

But we've come to realize that plants and animals don't live on lit-

tle patches of earth. They live in complex ecological systems, with which they have complex relationships. They can share those ecosystems with people, but only if people are good neighbors. If we're not, we may someday find ourselves leading a lonely existence in this world.

With Tidelands of the Connecticut River, the Connecticut Chapter takes the next step in its mission, a step that recognizes some of the complexity, urgency and difficulty of protecting a large ecological system. It is a bold new program that will focus on the river, along

which the Chapter has done much of its finest work, but transcends what the Conservancy has done there before.

Tidelands of the Connecticut River will center on The Nature Conservancy's traditional areas of endeavor: land protection, scientific research, and preserve stewardship. It will also call for new areas of focus, and whole new approaches, as we adapt to the challenges of long-term endangered species preservation in a complex world. To reach these goals, the Chapter will seek to raise \$18.5 million over five years.

The Tidelands program does not replace the Conservancy's

activities throughout Connecticut. The Chapter will continue to work, as it has for more than 30 years, in all regions of the state. Tidelands of the Connecticut River is an additional program, over and above our other activities, that we hope will someday serve as a model for comprehensive, landscape-scale conservation nationwide. In our more than two years of planning and preparation of the Tidelands Program, we have been both ambitious and visionary. To protect one of the Last Great Places, we can be no less.

— ANTHONY P. GRASSI, Chairman



TIDELANDS OF THE CONNECTICUT RIVER

In this issue of *From the Land*, we proudly unveil Tidelands of the Connecticut River, one of the most important and far-reaching programs in the Connecticut Chapter's history.

This program will include some activities that will be familiar to our members, but other aspects of it will chart unfamiliar territory. It is a bold, exciting endeavor that builds on our greatest strengths, as we seek new ways to grapple with the realities of conservation today.

Last summer in *From the Land*, I outlined The Nature Conservancy's Last Great Places program. This initiative, which has its roots in the United Nations' "Man in the Biosphere" program, broadens the scope of traditional conservation activities. Rather than attempting to protect single species and habitats, Last Great Places targets some of the great, expansive ecological systems of our hemisphere. Instead of trying to protect these places *from* people, Last Great Places builds partnerships and finds ways people can live in these places without disrupting the habitats of rare plants and animals.

On March 11, Nature Conservancy President John C. Sawhill announced 26 new sites in this hemisphere where The Nature Conservancy will apply its Last Great Places philosophy. This brings the total number of sites to 40 — not a large number when spread across half our planet. The Last Great Places are few and special.

That's why Tidelands of the Connecticut River is so exciting.

Why did The Nature Conservancy choose the lower Connecticut River as a Last Great Place, alongside California's dazzling Nipomo Dunes, Oklahoma's historic Tallgrass Prairie, New Mexico's sprawling Gray Ranch, and Panama's incomparable Darien National Park?

The lower Connecticut, generously embroidered with wetlands washed by the Atlantic tides, home to thousands of people and millions of wild plants and animals, is more than a beautiful area; it is a unique ecological system.

One of America's great waterways, the Connecticut River stretches 400 miles from the Canadian border to Long Island Sound. Its tidal region — the lower river and its tributaries — is one of the richest ecosystems in the northeast, providing habitat for hundreds of

species, seven of them globally rare or endangered, and containing an extraordinary wetland complex.

The Nature Conservancy has worked for nearly thirty years to identify and protect the most critical sites in the Connecticut River. The Connecticut Chapter has protected 1,975 acres along the river through purchase, easements and gifts of land. Another 897 acres of river habitat have been voluntarily enrolled by landowners in the Natural Heritage Registry Program.

The five-year, four-state Connecticut River Protection Program, completed in 1991, protected portions of 117 priority sites along the river. In 1991 the chapter also concluded a two-year biological inventory of the Connecticut River Watershed in Connecticut. The goal of this project was to help the Conservancy refine and enhance its long-range conservation strategy for the watershed, and it laid the foundation for preparing our ecosystem-scale protection plan for the river.

As I mentioned above, one of the key aspects of Last Great Places is partnership. Because the goals of Last Great Places are so ambitious, it is essential that we work closely with other organizations and individuals; The Nature Conservancy cannot hope to protect areas of this size and complexity by itself. Moreover, many organizations have been working for years to protect these same places, and the Conservancy hopes to work with them, and benefit from their experience, enthusiasm, and good will.

Protecting an entire landscape, human activity and all, rather than isolated pockets of undisturbed nature, broadens the scope of the Conservancy's habitat protection work. It is also a challenge to conventional conservation philosophy, which has traditionally seen the interests of humans and nature as mutually exclusive. The welfare of people and of the natural world are one and the same, if people are willing to accept the role of caretaker and guardian, rather than exploiter, of their environment.

— LES COREY
Vice President and
Executive Director



Natural Areas Conference Scheduled for June 22-25

The 20th Natural Areas Conference will take place on June 22 through 25 at the University of Orono in central Maine. This conference provides an opportunity for resource managers, scientists, students and volunteers to exchange ideas about identifying, managing, and protecting natural areas and endangered species. Activities will provide participants an opportunity to exchange ideas and learn about natural areas.

The theme of the conference is "Conservation in Working Landscapes." It will include papers on six symposia topics:

- » Conservation in marine ecosystems.
- » Conserving rare and endangered species and natural communities in working landscapes.
- » Managing natural areas in working landscapes.
- » Biological diversity in working landscapes: topical perspective.
- » Biological diversity in working landscapes: institutional perspective.
- » Inventorying and monitoring natural areas in working landscapes.

Field workshops will be organized around the six symposia.

- » Four pre-conference field workshops are being held on seabirds, marine mammals, Baxter State Park, and peatlands.

The Nature Conservancy Connecticut Chapter is among the sponsors of the conference, which is organized by the Natural Areas Association of the State of Maine.

Space is limited. For more information please write to Hank Tyler, Conference Coordinator, Maine State Planning Office, Station 38, Augusta, Maine 04333, or call (207) 624-6041. 

On the cover:

One of at least 15 bald eagles (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*) spotted from the Sunbeam Express during the chapter's Connecticut River eagle watching trip for Acorn members on February 27. Our federally endangered national symbol is one of the species that will benefit from the Tidelands of the Connecticut River program.



8.2-Acres in Conservation Easements Donated at Chapman Pond

In January Bruce and Barbara McGhie of East Haddam donated to the Connecticut Chapter two conservation easements on a total of 8.2 acres adjacent to its Chapman Pond Preserve, increasing the size of the preserve to 437 protected acres.

The McGhies donated one 4.6-acre easement and one 3.6-acre easement. The former piece includes approximately 1,000 feet of one of the two perennial streams that flow directly into the pond. Added to property purchased by The Nature Conservancy in 1982 and 1991, it further protects the northern stream. The latter acreage is wetlands adjacent to property owned by the East Haddam Land Trust, Inc. Both parcels lie on the northwest side of the preserve.

Chapman Pond is a 60-acre freshwater pond just east of the Connecticut River, between the Goodspeed Opera House and Gillette Castle State Park. It is surrounded by unspoiled marshes and floodplain forests, and provides wildlife, particularly nesting and migrating birds, with an array of breeding areas and a plentiful food supply. The

area is also home to several rare plant species. Chapman Pond has been one of The Nature Conservancy's highest priority sights in Connecticut since 1982.

— JOHN MATTHIESSEN

*Chapman Pond,
East Haddam*



Robert Perron

Adele Clement Donates 3.5 Acres at Hamburg Cove

A parcel of wild land near the confluence of the Connecticut and Eight Mile rivers is now permanently protected thanks to Adele Clement of Lyme, who donated 3.5 acres of heavily wooded land on Hamburg Cove to The Nature Conservancy Connecticut Chapter on December 30, 1992.

Hamburg Cove is a freshwater inlet where the Eight Mile River meets the Connecticut River. It includes many small, undeveloped inlets, an island, and a freshwater tidal marsh. The cove is home to two rare plant species, and is a roost site for wintering bald eagles.

Ms. Clement's donation is bounded on the west and south by property fronting the cove, which the chapter received as a dona-

tion from the late John A. Bross of McLean, Va., in 1990. The new property adds to the vital buffer area around the important habitat on this land. Although it does not have any frontage on the cove itself, it is bisected by a small stream that flows into the cove.

When combined with other lands protected by the Connecticut River Gateway Commission and the Lyme Land Trust, approximately 400 acres on the north side of Hamburg Cove are now permanently protected. The Conservancy holds title to an additional 80 acres of preserve riverfront habitat at the south side of the cove.

— JOHN MATTHIESSEN

The Nature Conservancy At Work

	Worldwide	Connecticut
Total Transactions:	14,328	621
Total Acres Protected:	6,413,000	19,188
Total Acres Registered:	487,000	5,103
Total Acres Saved	6,900,000	24,291
Members	707,722	16,570
Corporate Associates	900	19

Sunny Valley Preserve Farmed and Farm Preserved



Visit Another Last Great Place: Block Island, R.I.

Nature Conservancy members are invited to spend a week on Block Island, one of the Last Great Places, and learn about this beautiful island's rich natural and cultural heritage.

Explore a salt marsh, investigate an archaeological dig, work with a local lobsterman, tour historic lighthouses and visit scenic nature preserves! For more information, contact the Sea Breeze Inn, P.O. Box 141, Block Island, RI 02807, (401) 466-2275.

Proceeds go to The Nature Conservancy and the Committee for Block Island's Great Salt Pond. Trip dates are June 13 through 18 and September 19 through 24.

Heavy snowfall obscured the distant views of civilization, converting Sunny Valley Farm into a remote wilderness ranch as the Sunny Valley Preserve celebrated the arrival of its new farm tenants, Bill and Bonnie Weed. Despite the snow, the preserve advisory committee and several dignitaries welcomed the Weeds and their herd of Holsteins to newly refurbished facilities on the preserve's home farm in New Milford.

Preserve staff and the Weeds showed guests around with pride, pointing out the extensive repairs and improvements that completely restored an unused dairy barn and salvaged another barn previously slated for demolition. Working in hard winter weather and testing Murphy's Law at every turn, the job seemed only slightly less challenging than disposing of nuclear wastes.

But in the end, the preserve and the chapter demonstrated further the Nature Conservancy's commitment to revitalizing the resources that were donated by George Pratt in 1973. With two of the three preserve dairy farms now under long-term lease, the preserve's farm subcommittee has begun planning for a long-term lease at the Drumlin Hill Farm.

Dairy farms, almost as rare as bald eagles,

are exceedingly popular in the communities around the preserve. Thus, their proper management is a key component in our program to build community and regional support for the preserve, and to demonstrate that farming and natural resources can thrive side by side.

It's a tall order, but according to New Milford Mayor Liba Furhman, well worth the effort and much appreciated. "We have long recognized that the Sunny Valley Farm makes a unique and welcome contribution to the quality of life in New Milford," Mayor Furhman said at the Feb. 12 welcoming ceremony for the Weeds. "I think the people of New Milford appreciate the chance to drive or walk through farm lands and observe farming activities that have changed little in the last 50 years. I thank The Nature Conservancy for assuring that we can still do so."

By the time you read this, Spring will have finally arrived and we might be out looking for some of the preserve's other rarities, such as cooper's hawk, bobolink, and cerulean warbler nests on our 1,850 acres of diverse habitat. More likely we'll be reshingling a barn roof or clearing some overgrown pasture. Either way, it's a unique experience out here on the farm, out here on the preserve. 

— CHRIS WOOD



Jennifer L. Rood of Madison is the Connecticut Chapter's new Griswold Point Preserve monitor. A 1992 graduate of Western State College of Colorado, Jennifer has had a variety of work and research experience, including intensive study of the grizzly bear in the upper Yellowstone National Park region of Wyoming in the summer of 1990. If you see her during a visit to Griswold Point, stop and say hello!



Judith Petrowich

Bonnie and Bill Weed in the cow barn at Sunny Valley Farm in New Milford.



Researchers Provide Pieces to Stewardship Puzzle

Dr. Marge Holland, outfitted in hip-high waders, disappears into a towering stand of waving vegetation – cattails and common reed – searching for markers left behind at Lord Cove ten years ago. “I’ve found it!” she exclaims to her husband and daughter who are waiting in the open, ready to assist in her studies of the vegetation at this Connecticut River marsh in Lyme.

Dr. Holland is among the recipients of the Connecticut Chapter’s Small Grants who are exploring ways to give the Conservancy information for improved preserve stewardship.

In 1981, Dr. Holland and her biology students at the College of New Rochelle established transect lines through two brackish tidal wetlands along the Connecticut River: Haddam’s Great Meadows, on the west side of the river, and Lord Cove, where the Conservancy owns land. Using the transects as guides, they carefully noted the vegetation, species diversity and community structure of the marshes at these sites.

Of particular value in Dr. Holland’s study of the vegetation dynamics in the Connecticut River estuary is the ten year time span, because understanding change over time is essential to the Conservancy’s efforts to manage ecological systems.

Her observations confirm the fact that the common reed phragmites is increasing in both cover and frequency – scientific measurements for a plant’s growth in an area – at Lords Cove, while it is apparently relatively stable at Great Meadows. Populations of purple loosestrife, another invasive plant, are consistent at both sites.

Studies like Dr. Holland’s are integral to the Conservancy’s Tidelands of the Connecticut River initiative (see pages 1,2, and supplement).

“Wise management strategies require a landscape perspective, which includes upland residential, forest and agricultural land along with brackish tidal wetlands,” Dr. Holland points out. An understanding of how these pieces fit together will help the Conservancy maintain the fragile natural habitats within this complex landscape.

Scientific information is essential to the Conservancy’s efforts to protect rare and

endangered species and exemplary natural communities throughout the state. The Science and Stewardship program relies on the applications of scientific results, like those from Dr. Marge Holland’s study, to guide its efforts.

The studies of Doug Smith, who received a Small Grant in 1992, were also quite fruitful. Smith inventoried and surveyed freshwater invertebrates in Fairfield County, the results of which he will seek to publish in scientific journals; one article resulting from this research has already been published.

In his follow-up report, Doug wrote: “Despite the success in locating several species new to the state (and a few new to New England), a disappointing aspect of the study was the constant and area-wide evidence of the decline and disappearance of the freshwater mussel fauna of southwestern Connecticut.” A decline of the kind observed by Smith is a warning, and the results of his investigation once again underscore the urgency of protecting biological diversity throughout the state.

Addressing biological diversity beyond the state’s boundaries, grant recipient George Gale, a University of Connecticut PhD. candidate, continues to explore the habitat selection of the worm-eating warbler.

Adding to our understanding of this migrant bird will help us answer critical questions about the pressures they face in their summer ranges. Information on the well-publicized destruction of tropical habitats is now being augmented by research on the effects of fragmentation – division into ever smaller pieces – of the forests in which the birds nest in the northern hemisphere, including in Connecticut.

All of this information contributes pieces to the puzzles of preserve stewardship, answering questions that are critical to the protection of rare species.

Response to the small grants program in 1993 has been excellent. A continued fruitful partnership with Connecticut’s scientific experts will broaden our understanding and help The Nature Conservancy protect Connecticut’s biological heritage. *

— JUDY PRESTON



Judy Preston

▲
Marge Holland, recipient of a Small Grant from the Connecticut Chapter in 1992, uses a simple wooden frame to record pertinent vegetative information at Lord Cove in Lyme.

Wish List

There are many ways to contribute to the protection of Connecticut’s natural areas. Any donation in kind is tax deductible. The Connecticut Field Office needs the following items:

- » Chain saw with 16-inch bar or larger
- » Gas-powered hedge clippers
- » Dissecting microscope

If you would like to donate any of these items, please call David Gumbart at 344-0716.

Natural History Walks Begin June 19

June 5 is Connecticut Trails Day. The Connecticut Forest and Park Association has organized a celebration of 500 miles of hiking trails in the state. More than 100 guided hikes are scheduled throughout Connecticut on June 5, Connecticut Trails Day. Several of the hikes cross Nature Conservancy preserves.

Hikes are free and open to the public. Groups are welcome; please contact the hike leader in advance. For a free brochure describing Trails Day events throughout the state, contact the Connecticut Forest and Park Association, 16 Meriden Road, Rockfall, Conn. 06481, or call (203) 346-TREE.



John Matthiessen

Volunteer Opportunities

For many members, hands-on activities on Nature Conservancy preserves are a special opportunity to do some worthwhile work in beautiful places. Each year we have several work parties to utilize the outdoor skills of our interested volunteers, and this year is no exception. The Griswold Point work party, when we erect fencing to protect the nests of piping plovers (*Charadrius melanotos*), a threatened bird in Connecticut, has already occurred, but many additional events are scheduled. For more information, please check the Calendar listings on page 11, and join us in this important and satisfying work. — BETH LAPIN



Above: Volunteer David Squires of Clinton helps chapter Director of Science and Stewardship Judy Preston secure the wire mesh fence on Griswold Point in 1992.

Come join members of The Nature Conservancy's staff and invited guests on these informal and informative trips to a variety of nature preserves throughout the state. We will be exploring stewardship topics as well as enjoying the natural beauty of Connecticut.

Because we wish to provide a satisfying experience for all participants, numbers are limited, and advance registration is required. We will go rain or shine. To sign up, call us at 344-0716 and ask about the Natural History Walks.

SUNNY VALLEY, New Milford

Saturday, June 19, 10 a.m. to noon

Join Preserve Director and avid ornithologist Chris Wood on a walk exploring some of the wide variety of habitats found at the Sunny Valley Preserve. The preserve's network of trails offers walks through extensive woodlands, past a ravine, active agricultural lands and open pasture that is home to dwindling grassland bird species. Be sure to bring your binoculars!

CANOE GREAT ISLAND MARSHES

Old Lyme

Saturday, July 17, 10 a.m. to noon

This is an opportunity to see first-hand the Tidelands of the Connecticut River. We will explore the wetlands, botanizing and birding, as well as taking the big picture view of the ecological importance of the Connecticut River estuary, including its stewardship challenges. You will need to provide your own boat and a Coast Guard approved life jacket or flotation device for every individual in your party.

CATHEDRAL PINES, Cornwall Saturday, August 21, 10 a.m. to noon This a fascinating place to observe the impact of severe weather on what was once a towering stand of old growth forest. Tremendous 200 year old white pines were snapped off like toothpicks one July afternoon in 1989. Join us as we talk about the history and future of the site, and what it was like to be there that fateful afternoon in July. This is a short walk, with an initial steep incline to reach a good viewing point and uncover one of the few remaining behemoth trees left standing.

PLEASANT VALLEY, Lyme

Saturday, September 18, 10 a.m. to noon

Once an inspiration for the Lyme impressionist painters, this recent addition to the Chapter's preserve portfolio offers trails through old fields and woodlands, along the Eight Mile River, and past glacial kettle ponds. Join us for a pleasant walk as we explore the natural history of this 350-acre preserve.

POQUETANUCK COVE, Ledyard

Saturday, October 9, 10 a.m. to noon

This 234-acre sanctuary offers a wonderful opportunity to enjoy the peace and quiet of a secluded cove off the Thames River. A woodland loop trail takes us out along a steep promontory that juts into the cove. We will explore the extensive, diverse and very productive brackish tidal marshes at the site and likely see a variety of interesting birds. ♦



Leslie N. Cooley Jr.

TIDELANDS OF THE CONNECTICUT RIVER



... Not Just Another Pretty Place

ON MARCH 11, THE NATURE CONSERVANCY DESIGNATED THE LOWER CONNECTICUT RIVER ONE OF THE HEMISPHERE'S LAST GREAT PLACES, making this thriving wetlands complex part of an innovative international conservation initiative.

Native Americans called it "Quinatucquet": the "long tidal river." Transliterated as "Connecticut" by colonists, this river gave its name to our state and has shaped much of its human history.

It has also shaped our natural history. The fortuitous shifting sandbars in Long Island Sound impeded navigation by large ships, making the Connecticut River *the largest river in the northeast without a major port city at its mouth*. The extensive tidal influence of the Atlantic Ocean formed an extraordinary complex of salt, brackish, and freshwater marshes, teeming with plants and wildlife.

Although healthy, this spectacular biological system is vulnerable. Some plant and animal species in the Connecticut River watershed are already rare globally. Others are balanced precariously between their historic abundance and possible scarcity.

The Nature Conservancy Connecticut Chapter has announced a new program to tip the scales in their favor: TIDELANDS OF THE CONNECTICUT RIVER. The TIDELANDS program is the Chapter's answer to the question of how to permanently protect *the most pristine large-river tidal marsh system in the Northeast*.

The goal of TIDELANDS OF THE CONNECTICUT RIVER is to protect the whole ecological system of the lower Connecticut River: the lower 37 miles of the main stem and the major tributaries of that section.

This means protecting the watershed's exemplary plant communities, its species that are rare in Connecticut and worldwide, its diminished or declining species, its water quality, and the integrity of the ecological processes, such as tidal flushing and spring flooding, that maintain the system.

Attempting to protect the many components of an entire ecological system, rather than isolated pockets of natural habitat, is a revolutionary approach to conservation pioneered by The Nature Conservancy in its international Last Great Places initiative. It is an approach that confronts the conservation challenges of today, addressing the needs of both human and wild inhabitants of the ecological system.

The magnitude of this task is enormous, and the Conservancy has been working quietly for two years to set its priorities for the TIDELANDS program, and ensure that we address the most critical issues first.

TIDELANDS OF THE CONNECTICUT RIVER will be a permanent staffed program of the Connecticut Chapter, and will involve activities ranging from land acquisition and stewardship to water quality monitoring, conservation biology research, ecological restoration, and computer-assisted resource mapping. To support this program, the Connecticut Chapter has set a fund-raising goal of \$17 million over five years.

Endorsed by a wide variety of environmental groups, universities, state agencies, and Governor Lowell P. Weicker Jr. as an innovative attempt to protect an entire ecosystem, the TIDELANDS program provides an opportunity to pool the resources and knowledge of many parties and individuals to save a great and fragile place. Together, we can succeed.

— CLAUDIA POLSKY

Tidelands of the Connecticut River Land Protection Projects

Since June of 1991, the Connecticut Chapter has made the following acquisitions of land in the region of the Tidelands of the Connecticut River project.

Lord Cove, Lyme

In December 1991, Jane and Endicott Davison of Lyme donated a conservation easement on 35 acres on Lord Cove in Lyme.

Pleasant Valley, Lyme

Also in December 1991, Catherine and Elizabeth Fehrer donated a 15 percent interest in 235 acres of pristine land in Lyme, creating a new preserve.

Turtle Creek, Essex

In September 1992, the estate of the late Dorothy S. Bowles of Essex donated a 3.5-acre addition to the Turtle Creek Preserve in Essex.

An anonymous donor gave a partial interest in land and a conservation easement protecting a total of 34 acres along the lower Connecticut.

(CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE)

Below:

Willet (*Catoptrophorus semipalmatus*)



Mary Trenaine for Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology

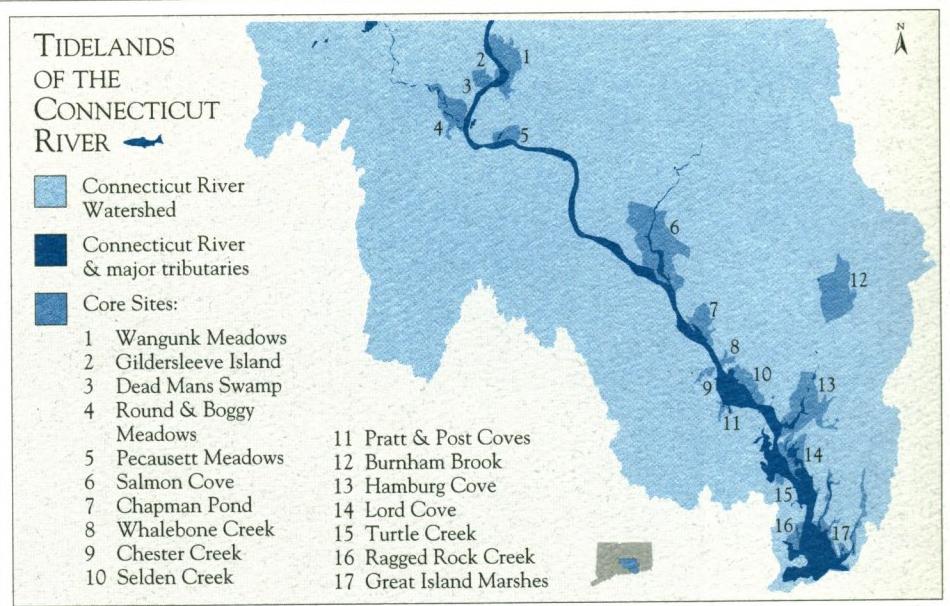
TIDELANDS OF THE CONNECTICUT RIVER

Connecticut River Watershed

Connecticut River & major tributaries

Core Sites:

- | | |
|-------------------------|-------------------------|
| 1 Wangunk Meadows | 11 Pratt & Post Coves |
| 2 Gildersleeve Island | 12 Burnham Brook |
| 3 Dead Mans Swamp | 13 Hamburg Cove |
| 4 Round & Boggy Meadows | 14 Lord Cove |
| 5 Pecausett Meadows | 15 Turtle Creek |
| 6 Salmon Cove | 16 Ragged Rock Creek |
| 7 Chapman Pond | 17 Great Island Marshes |
| 8 Whalebone Creek | |
| 9 Chester Creek | |
| 10 Selden Creek | |



HISTORICALLY, THE CONNECTICUT RIVER'S ABYSMAL WATER QUALITY would have made it an unsuitable choice for an ecosystem-conservation project: from the mid-18th through the mid-20th century, the river was so polluted it was dubbed America's best-landscaped sewer.

Thanks to the national and Connecticut clean water acts, and an infusion of \$600 million in state and federal money, the Connecticut River has been restored to a cleaner state — not only stench-free, but boatable, fishable and swimmable in many portions. In the words of Spence Conley of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, "The Connecticut River is probably the miracle recovery story in the U.S. I don't know of any river that's suffered more pollution and abuse from 1750 to the early 1900s."

Now, the Connecticut River awaits protection of its vital habitats to complement these heroic water quality restoration efforts. TIDELANDS OF THE CONNECTICUT RIVER represents an incredible opportunity to protect, and possibly even to improve through effective management, a major riverine ecosystem in the northeast United States.

The centerpiece of TIDELANDS OF THE CONNECTICUT RIVER is the river's tidal marshes: tidally-influenced salt, brackish, and freshwater wetlands.

The state of Connecticut is among the worst victims of national wetland destruction, having lost approximately 65 percent of its original tidal wetlands

since the 1780s. Today, a mere 17,500 acres of tidal wetlands remain in Connecticut. The TIDELANDS program gives us the opportunity to protect a meaningful proportion of the best remaining tidal wetlands in this state.

Exemplary plant communities in their own right, these marsh habitats also contain more than 43 species already listed as endangered, threatened, or "of special concern" in Connecticut. The significant uplands in the watershed of the lower river, also part of the TIDELANDS project area, are also home to nationally and globally rare species such as the majestic bald eagle and the puritan tiger beetle.

Using a combination of conservation techniques, ranging from selective land acquisition to on-the-ground biological management to insure the success of particular rare species, the Chapter will work to save the sixteen critical marshes mapped above. These are the "core" sites of the TIDELANDS program, so called because they are both physically and programmatically central to TIDELANDS OF THE CONNECTICUT RIVER.

The Conservancy will also work to insure protection of the Burnham Brook preserve in East Haddam, the one upland core site, to set aside a living biological laboratory in which to study the relationships between the health of uplands and the health of the river's wetlands and waterways.

As always, the Conservancy will work only with willing landowners in a non-confrontational, businesslike manner, and will consult intensively with the scientific community to ensure that conservation actions are based on the best available knowledge about the survival requirements of particular plant and animal species.

— CLAUDIA POLSKY

WHILE MANY RARE SPECIES CAN BE EFFECTIVELY PROTECTED using The Nature Conservancy's standard site-by-site approach, some others cannot.

For example, piping plovers nest on the same stretch of beach area each year, but the bald eagle requires a variety of habitats for feeding, perching, roosting, and potentially, nesting; the eagle requires more numerous and less predictable sites for its survival than the tiny plover. This necessitates an ecosystem-wide conservation approach to ensure protection of the diversity of habitats some organisms require.

Protecting an ecological system as complex as the TIDELANDS therefore challenges The Nature Conservancy to go beyond its usual conservation-through-acquisition methods. The Chapter intends to engage in water quality monitoring and improvement projects, nuisance species control programs, and anadromous fisheries restoration projects, among others, to ensure that this system is as strong and whole as possible.

The Chapter also plans to invest in conservation biology research at a greater scale than ever before, so that we can find answers to such critical questions as "What is the pollution tolerance of a salt marsh?" or "Where will marshes go if local sea level rises?"

The human element of the Tidelands system further requires that the Chapter study the type and level of human activity that is compatible with preservation of the health of the ecosystem, and explore ways to ensure that this healthy natural system can survive in an area that comprises rural, suburban, and urban environments.

The area identified in the map below is the direct drainage of the main stem of the Connecticut River, and the drainage basins of its major tributaries — an area of approximately 115,000 acres. It is in this area, so critical to buffering watercourses and tidal marshes from pollution, that we will focus our research and eventually, local environmental education efforts.

The job is far too big to be done alone. In order to truly protect this system, the Conservancy has begun to forge a number of partnerships: with local land trusts; with the Connecticut River Watershed Council; with the State Department of Environmental Protection; with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service; with universities such as Yale and the University of New Haven; and with dozens of other individuals and institutions interested in collaborating to protect this natural resource.

The Conservancy looks forward to this new model of conservation work: longer-term, larger-scale, more interdisciplinary and more cooperative than ever before.

— CLAUDIA POLSKY



Land Protection Projects (CONTINUED FROM PREVIOUS PAGE)

Hamburg Cove, Lyme

In December 1992, Adele Clement of Lyme donated 3.5 acres of land at Hamburg Cove in Lyme.

Chapman Pond, East Haddam

In January of 1993 Bruce and Barbara McGhie of East Haddam donated two conservation easements on a total of 8.2 acres adjacent to the Chapman Pond Preserve in East Haddam.

Burnham Brook, East Haddam

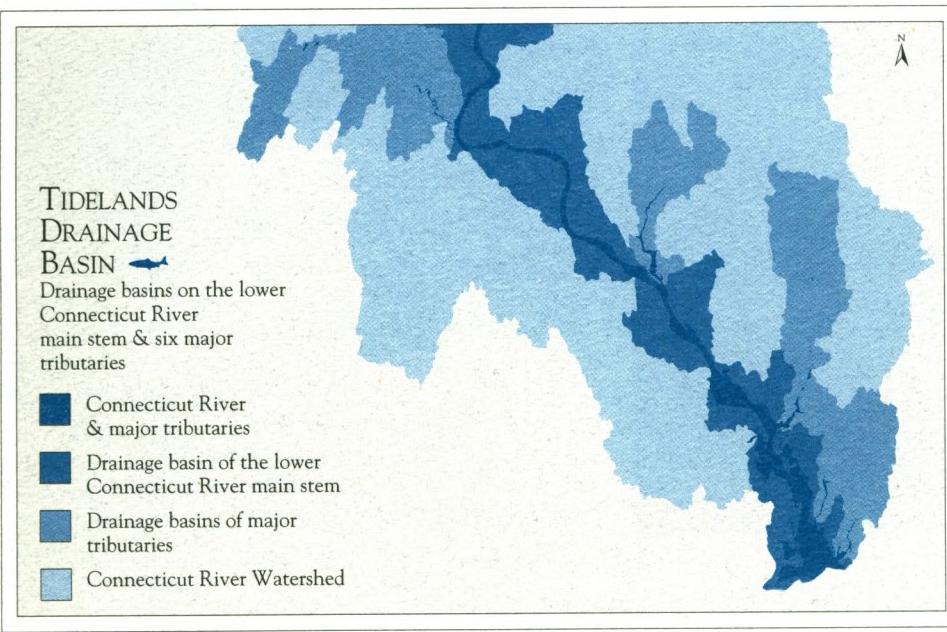
In December 1992, Dr. Richard and Esther Goodwin of East Haddam donated two tract of land totalling 27.2 acres at the Burnham Brook Preserve in East Haddam.

In April 1993, the chapter purchased another 215 acres from the estate of Patricia Smith.

Lord Cove, Lyme

At the time of the sale of 215 acres at Burnham Brook to the chapter, the heirs of Patricia Smith donated 10 acres adjacent to the Lord Cove Preserve in Lyme.

Above:
Selden Creek, Lyme.





Juliana Barrett

"The challenge of the Tidelands program will be to protect the region's fragile natural habitats in a way that harmonizes with the vigorous human use of the area."

— ANTHONY P. GRASSI
CHAIRMAN, NATURE CONSERVANCY
CONNECTICUT CHAPTER

Pictured clockwise from top:
Golden Club
(*Orontium aquaticum*);
Northern Harrier
(*Circus cyaneus*);
The Connecticut River
and Chapman Pond,
East Haddam.



Robert Perron



"Last Great Places . . . seeks to demonstrate that well-planned economic and recreational development can allow all members of these vital regions to realize their shared aspirations, as they protect the bounty of their natural resources . . ."

— FROM THE PROCLAMATION
OF GOVERNOR
LOWELL P. WEICKER JR.
GOVERNOR OF CONNECTICUT,
COMMENDING TIDELANDS OF THE
CONNECTICUT RIVER



Fred K. Truslow for Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology

"The lower Connecticut, generously embroidered with wetlands washed by the Atlantic tides, home to thousands of people and millions of wild plants and animals, is more than a beautiful area; it is a unique ecological system."

— LESLIE N. COREY JR.
VICE PRESIDENT AND
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR,
NATURE CONSERVANCY
CONNECTICUT CHAPTER

Industrious Students Collect Cans for the Environment

In February the Connecticut Chapter received a \$100 donation and a letter from Manchester High School freshmen Chris Durey and Elana Haveles. The girls raised the money through a science class assignment.

"Our science teacher laid out guidelines to select a topic of worldwide, U.S. or state concern," Elana said. Having seen a pamphlet on endangered species, Elana thought it would be important to do something in Connecticut for our plants and animals. "I always liked animals," Chris said, "And wanted to do something with animals, with endangered species."

Elana said her family noticed the numbers of Canada geese and loons seemed to be dwindling at the lake they visit in the summer. "I think it is really sad," Elana remarked. "The American population doesn't realize what's going on. We decided to collect soda cans to inform them of the problem."

In order to succeed, Chris and Elana's project required a well planned strategy, assistance from family and friends, and elbow grease. "We made and distributed brochures to inform neighbors of our plan," Chris said. The brochure described the essence of their school project, how their proceeds would help save needed land for endangered species, and when they would come to collect.

Then, Chris and Elana began to collect cans

on foot, in family cars, and on bicycle. "They were hard to collect," Chris said. "We went door to door, house to house and the bike method really didn't work." Each of the girls did their own street, putting the cans into big garbage cans.

Their families and their friend Lisa Chmieleo helped, and most neighbors assisted by leaving cans on the doorways. "We filled up an Arrow Star van," Chris said. Their first trip yielded 600 cans, and they received some cash donations. To raise \$100 they needed to collect nearly 2,000 cans!

This ambitious project is not Elana's first. On Halloween, for her 8th grade science class, she dressed as the Earth and her sister dressed as a tree to collect money for The Nature Conservancy.

Elana and Chris, congratulations and thank you for being leaders in the effort to save endangered lands and the species that inhabit them. Your hard work and vision contribute to the hope of success in protecting habitat for the animals and plants all around us. 

— DOROTHY MILLEN



Manchester High School students Chris Durey (left) and Elana Haveles.

New Employee

The Nature Conservancy Connecticut Chapter welcomes Martha Perry as its new executive assistant. Martha joined the chapter in January, having recently relocated to Connecticut from Washington, D.C., where she was communications director for OPERA America, a non-profit association for professional opera companies. She previously served as public relations director for Trinity College in Washington, D.C. and for Cincinnati Opera.

Martha has kept busy in recent months working with Chapter Director Les Corey and other chapter staff on a variety of projects, including preparing the annual operating plan, assisting with the announcement of Tidelands of the Connecticut River, and developing strategies to protect the Stratford Great Meadows marsh on Long Island Sound.

When Martha takes time out from learning all that is new to her about environmental conservation, she can be found singing, gardening, playing tennis, or watching movies with her husband, Gil, a newly-appointed faculty member at Central Connecticut State University.



John Mathiesen

M E M B E R ' S N I C H E



Meet Janice Pellegrino, former volunteer protection assistant for The Nature Conservancy Connecticut Chapter, who generously donated approximately 250 hours of her valuable time over a 14-week period this past fall.

Janice worked primarily with the Land Protection staff and the Land Trust Service Bureau. Janice always has a warm smile and a catchy enthusiasm for her work.

Janice came to the Conservancy with valuable skills in the area of urban and environmental planning and human ecology. During her time with the chapter, Janice's responsibilities were wide ranging. She helped out with everything from spelling our receptionist on the phones to assisting with the Land Trust Service Bureau's special session seminars and annual conference.

In the area of land protection, Janice did some much needed town hall research and renewed contact with some of our important landowners who have their property registered with the Conservancy.

Janice returned to her paid position with a West Haven law firm in November, and everyone at the chapter office misses her. Thanks, Janice, for all you did for us! 

— LESLEY OLSEN

Come to the Lyme Invitational Wildlife



Decorative bird sculpture, lithographs and cartoons will be among the work exhibited this year by Robert Braunfield of Hadlyme.

Pictured: "Belted Kingfisher"

The Nature Conservancy Connecticut Chapter is proud to host for the second time the Lyme Invitational "Wildlife In Art" Show.

This exhibition and sale has proved itself to be one of the nation's preeminent showcases for both traditional and contemporary wildlife art. With its emphasis on imaginative and innovative approaches to the art form, the Lyme Invitational "Wildlife In Art" Show affords visitors the opportunity to view and purchase the work of 20 nationally acclaimed wildlife artists exhibiting a diversity of styles and media rarely seen in one event.

The exhibition will be held from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Saturday and Sunday, June 5 and 6, at the historic Lyme Art Association Gallery on Lyme Street in Old Lyme. Admission is \$3 and proceeds go to the Chapter's Tidelands of the Connecticut River Program.

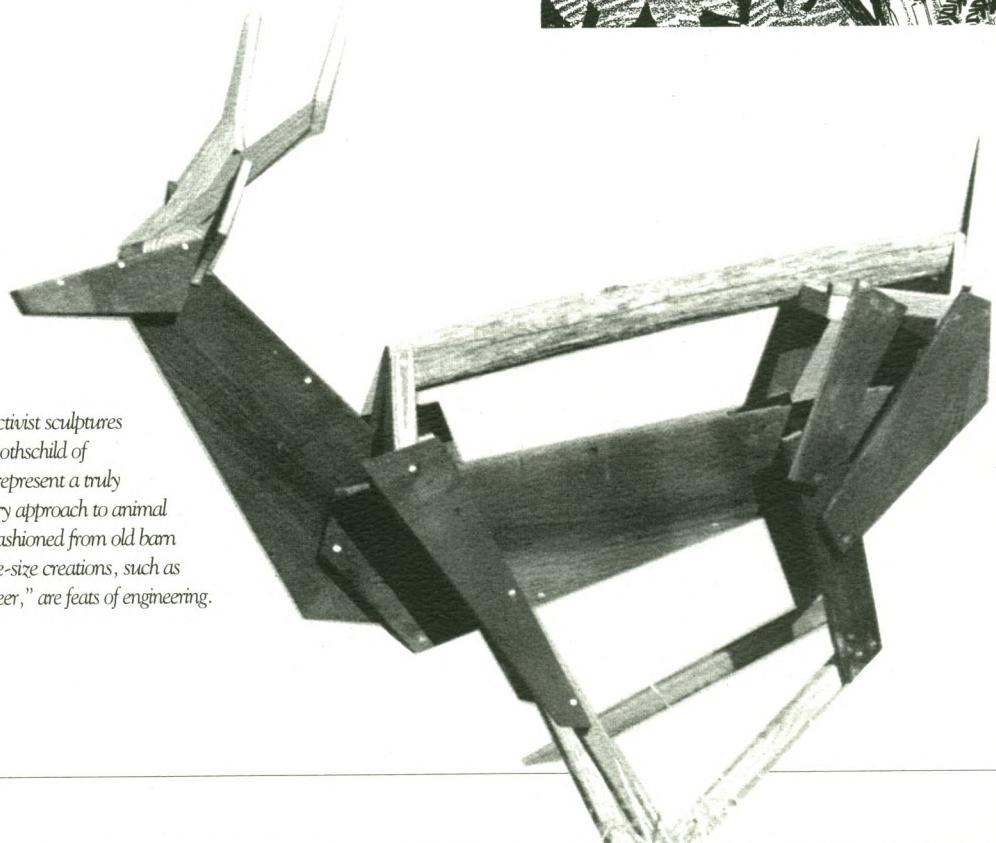
Barry Van Dusen of Princeton, Mass., has become one of our most popular exhibitors.

His life studies and beautifully executed watercolors are among the highlights of the show.

Pictured: "Pileated Woodpeckers"

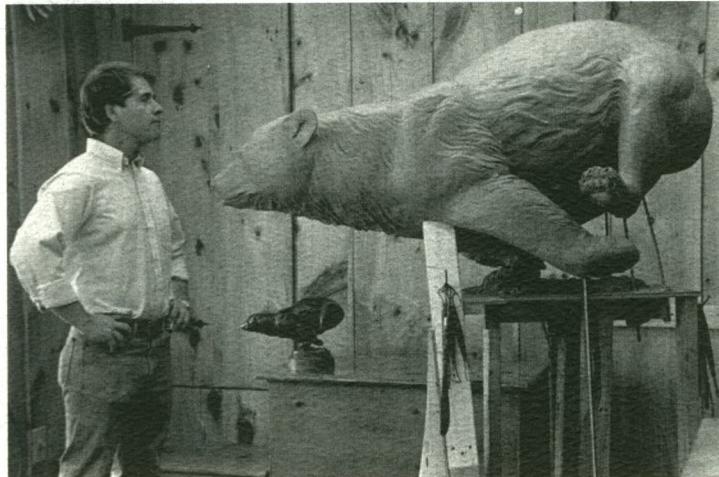


The constructivist sculptures of Richard Rothschild of Greenwich represent a truly contemporary approach to animal sculpture. Fashioned from old barn siding, his life-size creations, such as "Running Deer," are feats of engineering.



In Art Show, June 5 and 6!

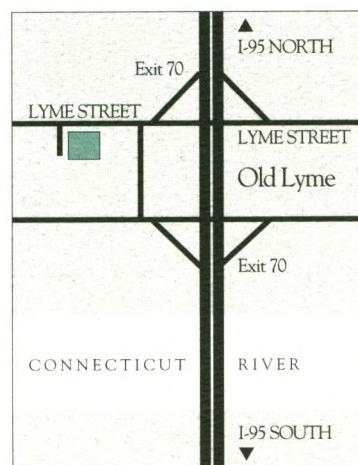
For the third consecutive year, Forest Hart of Hampden, Maine returns with his extraordinary bronze sculptures of big game, African cats, and playful river otters. Below, Hart works on a life-size black bear.



Scientific illustrator Sarah Landry of Arlington, Mass., is currently working on illustrations for a field guide to the mammals of Madagascar. Pictured: "Mouse Lemur"



It is with great excitement that we welcome Andrea Rich of Santa Cruz, California to Old Lyme this year. Andrea Rich's color wood block prints represent creatures from chameleons to primates and are seldom viewed by East Coast audiences. Pictured: "Frigatebirds"



Companies that Match Employee Gifts to The Nature Conservancy

At the urging of employees, directors, and retirees, more and more companies are matching charitable donations. The following is a list of companies that double their giving power by matching gifts to the Conservancy.

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* Those with an asterisk may contribute at a ratio greater than one-to-one. If your company matches gifts to the Conservancy but does not appear on this list, please call the Connecticut Chapter at (203) 344-0716.

C A L E N D A R

Saturday, May 15, 6 a.m. to 9:30 a.m.
Spring Migrants at the Katharine Ordway Preserve in Weston.
With luck, we'll find a variety of songbirds on the way to northern nesting sites.
Leader: Lise Hanners

Sunday, May 16, 1 p.m. to 4 p.m.
Workday at the Katharine Ordway Preserve in Weston.
We'll continue our work to maintain the arboretum and fields.

Monday, May 17, 1:30 p.m. to 2:30 p.m.
Walk for Senior Citizens at the Katharine Ordway Preserve in Weston.
Spring wildflowers should be on display.
Leaders: Helene Weatherill and Dorothy Abrams

Saturday, May 22, 1 p.m. to 3 p.m.
Family Nature Walk at Devil's Den Preserve in Weston.
Enjoy the height of spring.
Leader: Annette Lusardi

Sunday, May 23, 1 p.m. to 3 p.m.
Spring Flowers at Devil's Den.
Join Peggy French to learn about the late spring bloomers.

Sunday, May 30, 7:30 a.m. to 11 a.m.
Warblers in the Trees at the Sunny Valley Preserve, New Milford.
Early morning hike to enjoy migrating songbirds and leafing trees along Iron Ore Ravine.
Leader: Chris Wood.

Saturday, June 5, 6 a.m. to 9:30 a.m.
Breeding Birds at Devil's Den in Weston.
Learn about the many birds that nest in the Den's interior forest. Leader: Steve Patton

Sunday, June 6, 1 p.m. to 3 p.m.
Tree Identification Walk at the Katharine Ordway Preserve.
Leader Fred Moore will talk about the trees of our woods and point out some magnificent flowering laurel.

Sunday, June 13, 1 p.m. to 3 p.m.
Laurel Walk at the Den.
Leader June Myles will guide you to abundant displays of our state flower.

Monday, June 14, 10 a.m. to 11 a.m.
Walk for Senior Citizens at the Katharine Ordway Preserve.
Enjoy the laurel that abounds.
Leaders: Helene Weatherill and Dorothy Abrams

Monday, June 14, 7 p.m.
Endangered Connecticut Slide Show
Conservancy volunteer Peter Borgemeister will present the Endangered Connecticut slide program to members of the organization Our Town Our Planet at the First Congregational Church of Granby, 219 Route 189 (North of Granby Center). The public is invited.

Saturday, June 26, 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.
Work day at Devil's Den.
Before the heat of summer, we'll get the trails ready for vacation use.

Saturday, June 26, 10 a.m. to noon.
Sketching the Den with Blake Hampton.
This well-known artist will open your eyes to the artist's view of the Devil's Den landscape and give sketching instruction. Beginning artists are welcome. Sketching materials will be available for \$3 per person. Limited to 15 participants.

Sunday, June 27, 1 p.m. to 3 p.m.
Family Walk at Devil's Den.
Celebrate the beginning of summer with leader Annette Lusardi.

Sunday, June 27, 7:30 a.m. to 11 a.m.
Breeding birds at the Sunny Valley Preserve, New Milford.
From barred owls to bluebirds to bobolinks with Chris Wood.

Saturday, July 10, 10 a.m. to noon
Pond and Stream Life at Devil's Den.
Explore the Den's aquatic systems with leader Steve Patton.

Monday, July 12, 10 a.m. to 11 a.m.
Seniors Walk at Devil's Den.
Leaders: Helene Weatherill and Dorothy Abrams.

Saturday, July 24, 10 am. to noon
Family Nature Walk at the Den.
A stroll with leader Annette Lusardi by streams and ponds, looking for wildlife.

Saturday, August 7, 10 a.m. to noon
Insect Identification and Biology at Devil's Den.
Leader Steve Patton will teach you the basics of insect identification and talk about the biology of these abundant creatures.

Sunday August 22, 10 a.m. to noon
Sunny Valley Farm Preserve Tour
Guided by Preserve Manager Wayne Woodard.
Limited space, please call to reserve a spot.

WORK PARTIES

The following work parties will be held to remove non-native plant species from Conservancy preserves, to maintain the health of natural communities, including those harboring state endangered and threatened species.

Friday, May 14, Bauer Woods, Salisbury

Saturday, May 22
Chapman Pond, East Haddam
This work party will focus on the needs of the upland portion of Chapman Pond.

July 26 through 30
Chapman Pond, East Haddam and Bauer Woods, Salisbury
We need workers who can bring canoes for on-the-water work on Chapman Pond early in the week.

For more detailed information on work parties, including times and directions, please contact David Gumbart at the Middletown office.
Please register for all activities at the Devil's Den and Katharine Ordway Preserves by calling (203) 226-4991.
Please register for all activities at the Sunny Valley Preserve by calling (203) 354-3444.

 Please Join Us!

Yes, I'd like to become The Nature Conservancy's newest member in Connecticut.

\$100 (Acorn)* \$50 \$25

I'm already a member, but would like to join the ranks of Connecticut Acorns.*

Double your gift – send in your corporate matching gift form!

*Acorns are Conservancy members who contribute at least \$100 annually to Chapter operations. Connecticut Acorns are exempt from national membership dues notices, are invited on Acorn trips, and receive early notices for special events.

Please make checks payable to The Nature Conservancy and mail to 55 High Street, Middletown, CT 06457-3788. Thank you.



The Nature Conservancy

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From The Land

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Conservancy Partner Purchases 65,000-Acre Tract in Panama

In an unusually urgent move, The Nature Conservancy recently approved a \$400,000 loan to assist Panama's leading conservation organization, ANCON, in purchasing 65,000 acres of pristine habitat adjacent to the Darien National Park in Panama. The land, which was about to be sold to a lumber company for commercial purposes, forms an important addition to one of the Conservancy's designated Last Great Places.

"What's significant about this purchase is that, for the first time, a Nature Conservancy partner has successfully used classic Conservancy land protection techniques to establish the largest private natural reserve in Central America," observed Brian Houseal of the Conservancy's Latin American Division.

Stretching 1.4 million acres, the Darien Biosphere Reserve harbors five distinct ecological zones that are home to 130 species of mammals, 81 species of fish, 45 species of reptiles and amphibians, 449 species of birds, and more than 1,990 species of plants.

The newly acquired tract, known as Punta Patiño, offers a diversity of wildlife and habitat not found elsewhere on the reserve. Coastal forests and mangrove stands, dry tropical Pacific forests, cloud forests and tropical rainforests are among the distinctive vegetation found on the preserve. Of particular signifi-

cance are the extensive stands of old-growth mahogany, cedar, cuipo, and celba trees, which remain undisturbed on the reserve but otherwise have been virtually wiped out in Panama. Perhaps the most impressive feature of Punta Patiño, however, is its breathtaking, extensive coastline, which spans 37 kilometers and includes pristine lagoons, tidal basins, mud flats, salt water marshes and white sandy beaches.

The extensive primary forests of Punta Patiño form one of the largest unfragmented forest areas in all of Central America, and are home to a wide assortment of endangered and endemic species, including tapir, jaguar, manigordo, ocelot, conejo pintado, saino níque, several species of monkeys and several hundred species of birds.

Now that the land has been rescued from certain destruction, ANCON plans to establish an agroforestry program in the area, both to regenerate habitat and to provide valuable education and employment opportunities for the surrounding communities.

The Darien Biosphere Reserve is one of two international sites selected for support by the Connecticut Chapter of The Nature Conservancy. The other is the Blue Mountains of Jamaica.

— MARTHA PERRY

From The Land

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Connecticut Chapter
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